



Minutes of the AGM of UK Association of Gestalt Practitioners

Sunday 21st September 2014 at Wesley Hotel, Euston, London

Present: Jacqui Lichtenstern (Chair), Ruth Nightingale (Treasurer), Rod London (Secretary), Dawn Gwilt, Helen Thomas, James Bailey, Jane Flint, Liz Beauchamp, Rachael Kellett, Adam Smith, Anthony Turi, Ed Fellows, Janice Scott, Jennifer Connoly, Jon Blend, Lynda Anderson, Peri Mackintosh, Richard Toogood, Adam Kincel, Billy Desmond, Bob Smith, Carol Siederer, Chris O'Malley, Danny Boyle, Danny Porter, David Lloyd, David Polak, Di Hodgson, Eduardo Salvador, Helen Rowlands, Hilary Holford, Judy Graham, Julia martin, Mark Thomas, Mel Ovens, Marilyn Parker Armitage, Michael Foy, Milena Alincova, Philippa Grindal, Rob Tyson, Ruth Finar, Jenny Colls, Linda Zack [43 members in total].

No apologies

1. Minutes of the last AGM

These had been circulated by email and were accepted as accurate.

2. Matters Arising

8) Scholarship Bursary Fund

The Finance Officer had decided, in consultation with the committee, not to pursue this at present as the money would be tied up for too long.

9) Administrator Post

Funding was provided for Natasha Wilson to fulfil this role over the past few months. A vote of thanks was given for Natasha's contribution to the Association.

3. Financial Report from the Finance Officer (for further detail see appendix 1)

- a. An overview was given of the current financial situation and people were directed to the website for the full statement of accounts
- b. Cash balance looking good however looking at our forecasted income and costs the reserves will not continue to sustain the organization indefinitely.
- c. The financial goal for the organisation is sustainability. Financially we are not sustainable, based on current membership levels and income has to be increased via higher conference attendance and increased membership numbers
- d. Administration update:

- i. The membership list Reviewed and updated
- ii. Communicated with existing membership regarding conference and news updates
- iii. Created a new membership database.

4. The accounts were approved as accurate.

5. Report from the Chair

Jacqui Lichtenstern presented her report which is available on the website. She also offered a vote of thanks to Committee Members who retired from committee in last few months – Danny Boyle, Elizabeth Cooksey and Mel Ovens. Thanks were also expressed to Liz Beauchamp who resigned from her role as Honorary Treasurer.

A vote of thanks was offered to Jacqui for her efforts in organising this conference.

6. Constitutional amendments

Two proposed amendments and one already agreed by the committee were presented to the meeting.

Amendment to 6.1

Rod London explained the rationale for this amendment. Further discussion included:

- many members will have connections/affiliations with more than one institution;
- that the committee and membership can be self-regulating in ensuring reasonable representation;
- a further amendment was proposed and accepted to specify ‘executive coaching’ as a category of practice in 6.1 (a).

Amendment to 6.1 was passed:

In favour = 42

Abstention = 1

Amendment to 6.2

Ruth Nightingale explained the rationale for changing the timing of payments and:

- confirmed that subscriptions are payable in advance;
- an amendment was proposed and accepted that ‘PayPal’ be changed to ‘online’ in order not to tie the organisation to one service provider;
- an amendment was proposed and accepted that the date for training institute payments be changed to 15th November to allow time for student permission to be sought;
- further discussion around payment dates had to be ‘parked’ for further discussion;
- concern was expressed at the speed of discussion of these amendments, necessitating it returning to future meetings.

Amendment to 6.2 was passed:

In favour = 36

Against = 3

Abstentions = 4

7. UKAGP – The Future

- a. Jacqui Lichtenstern and Liz Beauchamp presented a Strategy Document for the future of the association. The ensuing discussion included the following questions/points:
 - i. The spending on admin is not entirely sufficient for the efficacy of the association; these are budget figures and some of the marketing will carry admin tasks. An improved website will ensure a greater income; but the largest admin function is for conference organisation;
 - ii. It was remembered that the employment of an administrator was on 18-month pilot and was due to be reviewed and that expenditure such as this should be put before the membership – this was ‘parked’ as an issue to return to at the 2015 AGM by when clearer figures would be available and more time to discuss fully;
 - iii. Ruth confirmed that there would be three quotes for the new website development, although £3000 was felt by some to be a good price
 - iv. Jacqui and Liz requested that anyone with any skills to offer or interest in volunteering should sign-up on the ‘special interest’ posters;
- b. James Bailey urged members to strive to recruit one person each to join the association and to be enthusiastic about Gestalt;
- c. The possibility of a monthly payment plan for trainees for conferences would be ‘parked’ for the 2015 AGM.

8. The next AGM will be held at the 2015 Residential Conference, 3-5th July 2015; venue TBC.

9. Elections for three Committee posts

Jacqui Lichtenstern

Proposed: Rod London, Seconded: Ruth Nightingale

Elected unanimously

Liz Beauchamp

Proposed: Jacqui Lichtenstern, Seconded: Jane Flint

Elected unanimously

Rachael Kellet

Proposed: Liz Beauchamp, Seconded: Adam Kincel

Elected unanimously

10. AOB

- a. Mel Ovens apologized for resigning from the committee due to personal circumstances, but felt the conference and AGM indicated a shift for the organisation this year.
- b. The Strategy Document will be available on the website; a request was also made for the ‘parked’ issues to be published on the website.

Appendix 1 **Finance Report 2013**

This Finance Report is based on the period of 1st Jan 2013 to 31st Dec 2013 and is taken from the opening cash balances from the Bank and Paypal Accounts at 1st Jan 2013 as we are unable to substantiate previous records.

Statement of account (unaudited)	
Opening balance	£18,235.26
Income	£13,748.97
Expenditure	(£19,086.66)
Closing balance	£12,897.57

A full income and expenditure statement will be presented at the forth coming AGM (see website)

The current reserves are healthy and it is this committee's intention to bring to the membership at the AGM ideas for future planning along with requests for support from the membership. This will include a recommendation for a reserve policy to hold double the value of annual membership fees year on year in the account. This will be held to cover unforeseen cost liabilities.

Despite the reserves being currently healthy the level of on-going costs in relation to income show some cause for concern for the sustainability of this organisation without attending to increasing income.

An audit is planned to be completed by the AGM 2014.

Total Membership for 2013 195

Trainees 124

Friends 5

Full Members 66

Administration

- Reviewed / updated membership lists
- Contacted institutions for 2014 payments
- Membership renewal reminders and invitations to members and lapsed members
- Conference invitations to current and lapsed members



- Highlighted the need for more streamlined website and payment methods to attract more members and reduce administrative costs

Appendix 2 **Report from the Chair of the Organising Committee**

Having completed my first year as Chair of the UKAGP it is my pleasure to present this report of the year's activities.

It has been a challenging year for the committee with a major change in members. Five people have stepped down and four have joined since the 2013 AGM, making a current total of seven. Forming the new committee has taken time and effort, as we find our places and identify areas of interest and involvement.

I would like to voice my appreciation for the time, hard work and commitment that Danny Boyle and Mel Ovens have given the committee, and hope they will continue to be involved as active members since stepping down.

I would like to thank the current committee members for their ongoing support and efforts: James Bailey (Membership, Recruitment, Publicity and Marketing), Jane Flint (Regional and Special Interest Groups), Dawn Gwilt (Pre-accreditation and Research and Co-representative for Wales), Rod London (Secretary), Ruth Nightingale (Finance Officer) and Helen Thomas (Trainee Representative).

I would like to formally welcome Liz Beauchamp, who responded to our call for an Honorary Treasurer, providing ongoing continuity and reliability when committee members come and go. We are also delighted to have Liz join the Conference Organising Group along with Dawn, Helen & Ruth and me.

I have completed my third year on the committee which constitutionally means I must also step down, although I am willing to stand for re-election. Accordingly there will be three positions to be filled and we would be pleased to receive nominations (the nomination form is included in this pack).

Natasha Wilson was employed as the Conference Administrator last year and immediately after took the new post of UKAGP Administrator, working for five hours per week. Her effort has been of invaluable assistance to the committee. To summarise, the work she has undertaken following a process of discussion with members of the committee and gathering of information includes the following:

Updating membership lists, payments & processing systems and data inputting on website; researching and setting up an ongoing permanent postal address, and new central email address; responding to emails and forwarding where necessary, distributing mailings including newsletters;



reviewing payment methods and renewal dates; working with the Conference Organising Group towards the 2014 conference and AGM; researching website improvement possibilities; and attending meetings with committee members.

In response to feedback from members, we hope to replace the newsletter with a shorter monthly bulletin to keep everyone fully up-to-date with events and other news. However, the success of this venture is dependent on members also submitting contributions – so please get involved by sending us details of relevant events and news.

The UKAGP is the UK's National Organisation of Gestalt Therapy (NOGT). As the NOGT representative I am a member of the General Board of the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT), and have attended meetings in Amsterdam and Krakow. I was deeply appreciative of being enabled to stay after the AGM in order to attend the EAGT conference last September. In the process of meeting the wider community and engaging with the conference, the idea was sown to bring forward our conference and create an opportunity for other UK members to meet their European colleagues. We are delighted to be hosting their next meetings in London, on 19th/20th September, and welcome members to our conference, including taking part in the panel discussion and facilitating workshops.

I have been amazed by the amount of work that goes into running an organisation. Having had no business background or experience, this has been an extremely challenging, but ultimately rewarding year. I have been reflecting on how the work, family and other commitments, difficult personal circumstances, and ongoing responsibilities impact the ability of committee members to juggle and prioritise the many time-consuming discussions, decisions and tasks necessary to run a young and evolving organisation.

I see parallels in the wider field, where people are struggling to cope with increased pressures whilst having fewer resources, feeling under-nourished and stretched. Our conference theme is 'Enriching Our Community' and I know this context of adversity will be taken into account in our keynote presentation by Belinda Harris.

In this spirit I have put forward a paper suggesting a new structure for future conferences, based on what I understand from the successful methods used within the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT). I hope to be able to share this at the AGM

We are also excited that we will be sharing with you a Strategy document, which the committee is putting together, under the guidance of Liz Beauchamp. We look forward to seeing many of you there, and hope to inspire some budding conference organisers to step forward and take part in making next year's residential conference happen.

Jacqui Lichtenstern

Chair of the Organising Committee

